

What is Claimed is:

1. An efficient, data-driven method for customizing printed products, the method comprising:
 - providing an interactive form in an HTML file to a user, the interactive form comprising a data field for receiving data from the user;
 - receiving data from the user in the data field;
 - creating a project object according to the received data;
 - updating the HTML file to incorporate the received data;
 - transmitting the updated HTML file to the user;
 - generating print file data; and
 - creating a printable file from the print file data, the printable file representative of the project object and executable on a printing machine for producing a printed document.
2. The method according to claim 1, wherein the HTML file, when provided to the user, contains default data within the data field; and
 - wherein the updating the HTML file comprises replacing the default data with new data.
3. The method according to claim 2 wherein the new data are personalization data or customization data received by the user.
4. The method according to claim 1, wherein the step of creating a printable file is performed in response to input by the user that the customizing complete.
5. The method according to claim 4 wherein the input by the user is selection of a printing option contained within the HTML file.
6. The method according to claim 1, wherein the steps of receiving, creating, updating and transmitting collectively define an iterative process.
7. The method according to claim 6 wherein the iterative process is terminated by input from the user that the customizing is complete.

8. The method according to claim 7 wherein the input is selection of a printing option contained within the HTML file.
9. The method according to claim 1 wherein the data includes customization data and personalization data.
10. The method according to claim 1 wherein the data includes project selection data.
11. The method according to claim 10 wherein the method further comprises the steps of:
identifying, in response to receipt of project selection data, software object files descriptive of products compatible with the selected project;
updating the HTML file to include a choice of the products described by the selected software object files;
transmitting the updated HTML file to the user to present the choice of products to the user; and
receiving, from the user, product selection input that is a selection from the presented choice of products.
12. The method according to claim 11 wherein the method further comprises the steps of:
identifying, in response to receipt of product selection input, an applicable project XML file; and
updating the HTML file to include data contained within the project XML file.
13. The method according to claim 12, further comprising:
parsing the project XML file to retrieve print document data contained therein; and
assembling the print document data into a preview image, the preview image portraying the selected product as it will appear when printed.
14. The method according to claim 13 wherein the step of updating the HTML file to include data contained within the project XML file comprises incorporating the preview image into the HTML file.
15. The method according to claim 13, further comprising:
receiving, from the user, new field data in the HTML file;

updating the project object according to the received new field data; and
updating and transmitting to the user the HTML file to incorporate the received new field data.

16. The method according to claim 15, wherein the steps of receiving new field data, updating the project object and updating and transmitting the HTML file collectively define an iterative process.

17. The method according to claim 16 wherein the iterative process is terminated by receipt of termination input from the user into the HTML file indicating that the customizing is completed.

18. The method according to claim 17 wherein the termination input is activation of a print button within the HTML file.

19. The method according to claim 17, further comprising:
creating a final project XML file in response to receiving termination input from the user.

20. A system for customizing printed products, the system comprising:
a server having a program for updating an HTML page with server data and user data;
the server having data storage thereon;
the data storage containing server data files which contain the server data;
the server being operatively connected to a computer operated by the user, such that it can transmit the HTML page to the computer and receive the user data from the computer; and
the server also operable to parse the updated HTML page to generate print data and to assemble the print data as a printable document file.

21. The system of claim 20 wherein the server data comprises:
software object files descriptive of products contained within a product line;
UI HTML files which collectively define the HTML page; and
project XML files associated with the software object files.

22. The system of claim 21 further including files comprising a preview image.

23. Computer-readable storage media containing software thereon which, when loaded and executed on a computer, and in combination with execution of other software on the computer, causes the following steps to occur:

- an HTML page comprising data fields is presented to a user;
- data is received from the user through the data fields;
- in response to the receipt of the data, a project object containing project data is created;
- the HTML page is updated to incorporate the received data and the project data;
- the updated HTML page is parsed to generate print data; and
- the print data is assembled into a printable document file.

24. The computer-readable storage media of claim 23, wherein the steps further comprise: the printable document file is sent to a printer for printing a customized document.

25. The computer-readable storage media of claim 23, wherein the steps further comprise: the HTML page comprises data defining a selection of project types for presentation to the user;

- project type selection data is received from the user through the data fields;
- in response to the receipt of the project type selection data, software object files defining applicable products are identified;

- the HTML page is updated to incorporate data from the software object files;
- the updated HTML page is presented to the user and a selection of products is presented thereon;

- product selection data is received from the user through the data fields; and
- in response to the receipt of the product selection data, a project XML file is identified and presented to the user within the context of the HTML page.

26. A method for enabling a provider to easily create a product customization system, the method comprising:

- providing an application program interface which interfaces to a print engine, wherein the application program interface is receiving page definition data from the provider;

- presenting an interactive Web page according to the page definition file;

- retrieving project data from a remote server; and

combining the project data with the page definition data to create a printable document.

2025-03-20 10:00:00